



Mr. *William William's*

SERMON

At the ORDINATION

OF

Mr. *Warham Williams.*





THE
Great Concern of Christians,
And Especially of
MINISTERS,
To Preserve the
Doctrine of Christ
in it's Purity.

Shewed in
A SERMON

Preached at **Watertown,**

June 11. 1723.

At the **ORDINATION**

Of the Reverend

Mr. Warham Williams,

Pastor of the **CHURCH** in the Western-
Precinct in said Town.

By **William Williams, M.A.**

Pastor of the Church at *Hatfield.* *W*

BOSTON: Printed by S. KNEELAND.

MDCCXXIII.

Great Council of Cardinals
And Bishops
MINISTERS
To Preserve the
Doctrine of Christ
in the Church
of England

A SERMON



Preached at St. Pauls Church
on the 24th of November 1661
By
Mr. William Williams
Pastor of the Church of St. Pauls
London
Printed by I. Bladwell
at the Sign of the Gun
in St. Pauls Church-yard
1661

An Ordination SERMON.

2 Tim. I. 14.

*That good thing which was committed unto thee,
keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us.*

THE Work of the Ministry is honourable, it was anciently so accounted; 'till God separated the Tribe of Levi, the chief of the Family, the first-born were always separated to it; and it is not to be less accounted of now, if we consider the end of their office, by whom they are sent and with what authority they are invested: And altho' some may think disgracefully & meanly of it, yet there is no doubt, they will think otherwise of it, when they shall see what is a Prophets reward, when they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. This thought should be deservedly an inducement unto all whom God hath honoured with it, to be very watchful that they do nothing that may lessen the credit of it, and serve to bring their Office or Persons into contempt, or bring a disgrace to Christ. They who are to enlighten others should shine as Lights in the World, in the clearness of their knowledge, and majesty of their conversation, that their gravity and piety may command the reverence of their observers.

BUT

BUT they should remember that their Work is weighty, there is not only *dignity* but *duty* belonging to it, which all that would be faithful to Christ in the discharge of it will be careful to understand and practice, that they may be approved of Christ and their own Consciences.

Now it is something of *this* I would (with Divine Assistance) lay before you at this Time from the *Text* I have read—. The words may be considered, as an earnest *Exhortation*, *Caution* or *Charge* to *Timothy* the *Evangelist*, whom I rather call so from 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. than from the *Postscript*, *Bishop of Ephesus*, because it is generally agreed that these were not, (as the *Text*, of divine Inspiration, but added from some uncertain tradition. The matter of the *Exhortation* is, *That good thing which was committed to thee keep.* This good thing is doubtless to be understood of the *Doctrine of the Gospel*. This is truly a *good Word*, the most welcome message that was ever brought to the World: one of the most excellent fruits of the divine mercy to it. And that this is what is intended seems to be plain both from the foregoing and following words, as also from 1 *Tim.* 6. 20, 21: This is said to be *committed to his trust*, that is, to publish and preach unto others. *Keep*; that may comprehend believe it, practice it, preach it, be ready to maintain, defend and stand up for it against all those that would either rob you or rob the Church of such a Treasure, and introduce idle speculations and philosophical niceties, as the *Heathen Philosophers* and the *Gnosticks*.

Gnosticks (the followers of *Simon Magus*) did. And this may be expounded by *Tit. 1. 9.* where it is made or declared the duty of every *Bishop* or *Elder* in the Church, *to hold fast the faithful word*, to be well established and confirmed in the faith, and ready and able to defend it, so as to stop the mouths of gainfayers. Here is a direction how he should keep it, *by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.* We need his influence & assistance to all duty, and have particular encouragement to depend upon him to *guide us into all truth, and to bring all truths to our remembrance*, to enlighten our understandings, to work faith, to excite love, and animate to obedience.

DOCT. *IT is a special duty incumbent on Ministers to preserve the Doctrine of the Gospel in the purity of it.*

By the Doctrine of the Gospel I would be understood, as comprehending the *whole Doctrine of Christ*, not in a restrained sense to what is left us by the *four Evangelists*, the whole rule of faith, the word of God. Every truth of God according to its weight and moment must be kept. It is reported as a saying of *Luther*, *Potius ruat cælum quam una mica veritatis percat.* There is nothing superfluous in the Word of God, nothing must be diminished from it, or added to it. Now the Truth of God is a Trust or Depositum delivered to the Saints, which they must *contend earnestly for*, *Jude 3.* And especially *Ministers* whose duty it is not only in common with all Christians to practice, but to preach it, this is committed to their trust especially,

especially, and they are *set for the defence of the Gospel*, Phil. 1. 17. and Mal. 2. 7. *The priests lips should keep knowledge, & they should ask the law of his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts*.

In speaking to this *Doctrine* I shall shew How this Duty is to be performed, give the *Reason* of it, and make some *Application* of it.

I. THIS Duty of *maintaining the Doctrine of the Gospel in the Purity of it*, must be attended by making it their care to understand & preach the mind of Christ (1) In matters of *Faith*. (2) In matters of *Practice*. (3) In matters of *Worship*.

I. As to *matters of Faith, or things to be believed*. The doctrine of Christ is the rule of Faith, by this all the Articles of Faith are to be tried. The authority and truth of God render all divine revelations of infallible truth, and therefore worthy to be believed Joh. 8. 46. *If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* We may not receive any Doctrine because men confidently affirm it, but because the Scriptures require it. Act. 17. 11. *These were nobler than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scripture daily whether those things were so.* They are commended for their diligent examination of the Doctrine, though preached by an *Apostle*; who certainly might pretend to as much authority as any Officer in the Church since. And whoever they be that teach Doctrines not contained either expressly or by necessary consequence deducible from the Word of God we are not bound to receive them as points of

Faith

An Ordination S E R M O N.

5

Faith; for Christ hath charged us, Mat. 23. 10. *To call no man master, because one is your master, even Christ.* 'Tis one of Christ's Offices that he is *Prophet* and infallible *Teacher* of his Church, and every Soul that refuses to hear Him incurs the greatest hazard, and Christians may not absolutely give up themselves to the conduct of any man's judgment as a rule to determine his Faith. To submit their Faith and Consciences in matters of Religion to any humane authority whatsoever, whether *Popes* or *Councils*, is to rob Christ of his prerogative. *Isai. 8. 20. To the Law & to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* And how awful are the words of the *Apostle* to this purpose, one would think enough to strike dread upon those that would add any new Articles to the Christian Faith, and impose them upon others, *Gal. 1. 8. But though we or an Angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* For the fuller conviction of the danger that would attend this, the *Apostle* puts himself into the number, *if we, if I, or any one that hath authority to preach, or any Angel from Heaven preach otherwise, let him be accursed.* Great care then ought to be used by Ministers that they *Speak as the Oracles of God*, that they publish and press nothing as an *Article of Faith* that is not supported by the word of God, and should so hold fast the word of Truth as not to suffer any Article of Faith hilt hereon to be wrested from them; especially

B

things

things essential and *fundamental* in Religion the ignorance of which is damnable, and the denial of them heretical. These challenge the greatest of our care, that we may keep them entire, and *not give way to seducers*; the determining wisely and justly what *these* are might be a great service to the Christian World would doubtless do much to recover & maintain the peace of it. This then is one thing the Ministers should be careful about, to be rightly principled in matters of Faith that they may think and speak concerning God and his will the *thing that is right*. Tit. 2. 7, 8. *In Doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned.*

2. As to *matters of Practice*. The Doctrine of Christ is a *Doctrine according to Godliness*. It not only teaches what we must believe, but what we must do, and how we must live, if we would either glorify God on Earth, or enjoy Him in Heaven. Jam. 2. 20. *Faith without works is dead*. Faith destitute of the proper and genuine fruit of it will bring no man to Heaven. There is a *way cast up*, prepared, revealed and established by God, in which it is possible for man to obtain life and immortality, though miserably fallen and *alienated from the life of God*. This is a *way of Holiness*. One great design of the Gospel is to make men holy, and to encourage and promote the growth of holiness in them. 2 Pet. 1. 4. *There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature*. 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having these promises*
dear

An Ordination S E R M O N.

7

early beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all
filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the
fear of God. The Gospel sets before us the high-
est Patterns, the strongest Arguments, the great-
est Encouragements to an universal holiness :
yea it is the great instrument which the Holy
Spirit uses in implanting of it. Jam. 1.18. We
are begotten by the word of Truth. So 1 Pet.
2.23. A special part of man's misery by his
apostacy from God lies in the loss of God's
image, on the loss whereof succeeds an aversion
to him, an enmity to his law, and a propensity
to all manner of sin, an unfitness to every thing
that is good and holy. Now we must be reco-
vered from this wretched state & temper of Soul
by the regenerating Spirit working in and with
the Gospel, renewing us in the spirit of our minds,
and uniting us to Christ by faith & love, who is
the fountain of all life, and growing up in him.
Therefore Ministers must understand & teach the
nature & necessity of Regeneration, of Repentance
toward God, of Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,
of Love to God, and of universal Obedience to
the will of God ; which though in our present
state cannot be perfectly obtained, yet must be
sincerely endeavoured, the defects of it lamented,
and a daily improvement made of Christ for
ardon and strength ; that we may be strong in
the grace that is in Christ Jesus, yea may grow
stronger and stronger; this is of absolute necessity
to men's peace and acceptance with God here,
and Salvation hereafter. These things none of
our hearers should be ignorant of, nor want pro-

per and forcible arguments unto, as being the things that accompany Salvation, and are preparatory to it. And, as *One* truly saith, "No Man hath more of Heaven, than he hath of God" and of His pure, placable, patient, benignant and gracious nature. Religion lies not in external duties, services and priviledges, but in the purity of heart and life, and it's conformity to the holy nature and will of God. Men may call themselves Christians because of their Profession, but God will never account them so if they have not the *life of Christ* begun in them.

3. *In matters of Worship.* Worship, i.e. Divine or Religious Worship, is an honour due to God and to none but God, and this both *natural* and *instituted*. This even the light of nature taught the heathen world, and it is founded upon the being and excellency of God, and expressly required in the *First* and *Second Commandments* of the *Decalogue*: and great regard should be had to the word of God to guide us in the performance of it, both as to the matter & manner of it, that we perform no acts of worship but what are becoming of him, and required by him. God hath not left this matter to the wisdom of man to order, but reserved it to himself, as his own prerogative, and fully declared his will in the matter, and we may not add to or diminish from it. It was *Moses's* commendation, & it is recorded to his everlasting honour, that *he was faithful in the use of God as a Servant*, doing all things relating to the worship of God, according to the pattern, given him by God. And it becomes

Christian

An Ordination S E R M O N.

9

g the *Christians* now, but especially *Ministers* to search
separate to the mind of Christ in this matter, & keep
to *Magistrates* themselves exactly to it, as to all *Officers & Ordina-*
Gods *ances & Rites* in Worship. Experience hath a-
benignantly shewed, that the nature of man is too
in error to *Superstition*, and that partly thro' pride
but in their own wisdom, slavish fear, or respect to
their carnal interest; many things have been in-
troduced into the worship of God, and imposed
upon the *World*, by those who pretended to
authority so to do, that were never commanded
by God. It is abundantly known that thus it was
under the *Anti-christian Apostacy*, 'till the visible
Church instead of being a *Chast Virgin to Christ*
became a *Prostitute or Whore*, yea a *Mother of*
Harlots and Abominations, because of their cor-
rupting the *Worship of God*. Now tho' the divine
mercy hath appeared in causing light to break
out in *several Nations*, whereby much good hath
been done, & many errors & corruptions detected
and exploded, yet it is a thing that hath been
long lamented, that in *several Nations*, & parti-
cularly in the *Church of England*, too many things
are still retained of the *Romish Hierarchy* and
of *superstition*, to the prejudice & dishonour of the
Reformation there; too many to be inserted at
this time: and that tho' several attempts have
been made to advance the *Reformation* there,
and carry it on to greater perfection both for-
merly & lately, yet much opposition hath been
made to it, & many clogs & discouragements cast
in the way, which even at this day, have a dark
aspect on the Nation, and give ground of fear,
to what things in time may grow. But

To *An Ordination* S E R M O N.

BUT it becomes the *People of God* in this Land upon many accounts, to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free*, and to be watchful that they *may not be entangled again in any yoke of bondage*, Gal. 5. 1. And to this purpose I would only say, let it be the care both of Ministers and People steadily to adhere to, and consult the word of God in all matters of Worship as well as Faith, & to go no further than we have that to warrant us. Let us not esteem it a warrant or ground of practice whether truly or falsely (is uncertain) that this or that Office or Ceremony or Way of Worship, hath been handed down to us by Tradition or the *Ancient Usage* of the Church. It is not *Tradition* but *Institution* must justify our practice: And having said thus much upon this head, let me add a few words respecting *Tradition*.

I. THERE is no Argument in this, *meerly that any practice hath been the ancient practice of our Fathers*. If they were wise & good Men, weight may be laid upon it so far as to put us upon a serious Examination of it; but meerly that such a thing hath been an ancient practice and usage of our *Nation & Fathers* is no Argument: for in matters of Religion it is no rule to do as men have thought best, but we must enquire whether their Judgments have been regulated by the Word of God. The Prophet refuseth this plea, *Jer. 44. 17.* there is as much weight many times to be laid upon the judgment of other Nations as our own; one Nation is no more secure from error than another. *National Customs* are not therefore to be vindicated, because they are of long use & standing.

An Ordination S E R M O N.

11

Land
liberty
to be
tain in
urpose
of Mi
d con
rship
e have
arran
fly (is
mony
n to us
urch
fy our
n this
dition
neerly
actice
Men
ut us
eerly
actice
Argu
ule to
ft en
regu
ufert
eight
nt of
is no
tiona
be
2

2. ANCIENT practices of the Church in the
rurer & primitive times, which are no ways con-
adicted by, but consonant to the word of God, there
ay be great weight laid upon them: In as much
s they do clear up the meaning of the Scripture
nd the mind of God in some cases. Thus the
bservation of the *First Day Sabbath*, the use of
asant Baptism; concerning which we have seve-
al hints in Scripture, and we are strengthned
n our practice of these things the rather, be-
ause we find them to be the ancient practice
f the *Apostles & Primitive Church*.

3. ANTIQUITY is no Argument for any practice
hen that practice is contrary to the word of God.
That is truly & properly the *Old way* that is pre-
cribed to us by the word of God; so it is called,
Jer. 6. 16. When therefore ancient usages and
practices cross the written word, no weight is
to be laid upon them; for this were to set the
udgment of men against the Judgment of God.
f a practice be old, if it hath been a practice of
good Men, yet it is sinful if it cross the word
of God. *Isai. 8. 20*. If we once forsake that rule,
or invalidate and weaken it by the judgment
of men, we overthrow all religion, and know
not where to stop.

4. AN Argument from Antiquity, if that Anti-
quity be reckoned from the corrupt times of the
Church, is of little force. Soon after the age of
the Apostles there grew up great degeneracy,
which was foretold, *1 Tim. 4. 12*. it is no proof
at all to say a thing was practiced many Hun-
dreds of years ago, when all manner of corrup-
tions

tions had grown into practice in the professing world. Age don't make errors truths. If men have long practised such things as are bad, they don't therefore become warrantable and fit to be justified; yea ordinarily such practices as to their rise when the Church was grievously degenerate, and were not known before, are to be condemned, as being a branch of their degeneracy. Many things of this nature might be named, as *burning of Candles* in the Church the day time, *Instrumental Musick*, the use of *sacred Vestments* as they are called, setting up *Altars* in Churches; *Denying the People the Cup in the Lord's Supper*; *Kneeling at the Sacrament* and others like them, have grown to be customs in the Church in the time of *Antichristian darkness*, and no length of time will render them warrantable.

I proceed to the *Reasons* of the Doctrine.

I. BECAUSE it is for the honour of God and the Truth, that it be preserved & maintained. God's praise and honour upon a People when he condescends to reveal his will to them. Deut. 4. 8. *What nation is so great that hath statutes & judgments so righteous as all the law that I set before thee?* And they should put honour upon God by a hearty embracing of it, by a ready obedience to it, and a care to propagate it and preserve it. If we don't do thus, we shew an insensibleness of our privilege and unthankfulness for the divine mercy: besides we should be the more ready to do this that we may preserve the honour of it in the world, among whom it is so often questioned and

scorne

orned, Mat. 11. 19. *Wisdom is justified of her chil-*
ren. Psal. 119. 126, 7. *They have made void thy law,*
therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea
above fine gold. The Primitive Christians shewed
 their love to, and esteem for the Christian Reli-
 gion, that they were glad of an occasion to die for
 it, and their zeal was the more inflamed to it
 by the opposition that was made against it. Now
 we own the same God, believe the same Truth,
 and profess to inherit the same Spirit, it con-
 cerns us to be valiant for the truth upon the earth,
 1 Cor. 9. 3. not to be of a cowardly & careless spirit,
 as they are said to be. This indeed were to
 betray the truth and the honour of God too, into
 the hands of it's enemies, when we suffer it to
 be wrested out of our hands. Besides the excel-
 lency of the Truth itself, our concern in it, as it
 is the Charter of all our priviledges, the Rule of
 our practice, and the Foundation of all our hopes
 and comforts, might be insisted upon as Argu-
 ments to render it precious to us, and therefore
 engage us to preserve it and maintain the
 purity of it. Now as this should be an induce-
 ment to all Christians, so in particular to Mini-
 sters, who should be the more concerned for the
 honour of God because of the honour he puts
 upon them. And this leads me to say,
 2. THEY should do so, *because of the trust re-*
posed in them. The Faith is said to be, *delivered*
unto the Saints, Jude 3. not only revealed to them,
 but entrusted with them, and more especially to
 such as are constituted as Guides & Teachers in
 the Church. Christ gave it nextly to the Apostles,

Joh. 17. 8. *The word thou gavest me I have given them : and from them to their Successors, as the Text. So in Tim. 1. 11. The glorious Gospel committed to thy trust. And 2 Tim. 2. 2. The thing that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also.* The Gospel is to be transmitted successively to the Officers of the Church from one age to another, and faithful Ministers should be chosen for it as being only fit for such a trust. Now this is partly for the benefit of the present Age, & partly for the advantage of Posterity. The present Age must be taught; how else should they understand, believe and obey the truth? They must be taught the way of Salvation; how else may they be pardoned, reconciled, sanctified, and fitted for eternal life & glory in Heaven. Men are naturally ignorant, prone to mistakes & errors. Hence we are said, to *speak lies from our womb*, Psal. 58. 3. because these things are in our nature, and we are ready to cherish them, (*Pergiani omnes nascimur & cum Pharisaico supercilio* Spanhem.) The corrupt understanding is prone to cherish error as the depraved affection and appetite to cherish vices. There is therefore need that great care should be taken that truth be plainly asserted, clearly stated, strongly confirmed, yea often inculcated, lest men are turned aside into the paths of the destroyer. We receive the Faith by the Ministry of the Church, not for the authority of the Church. Hence to whom God hath set as lights in it should be forth the word of life, Phil. 2. 16. Partly for the advantage

advantage of *Posterity*. 'Tis for their sakes as well as our own that the truth is committed to us. Hence it is said, *Isai. 38. 19. The father to the children shall make known thy truth.* Accordingly you find this express injunction, *Psal. 76. begin. He appointed a law in Israel that they should make known to their children :* and so successively in their generations, they were to teach them *privately*, & to take care that they might be taught *publicly*. For this end was the *School of the prophets* instituted among them, and cherished, that Religion might be continued, the Laws of God known & observed among them; that *one generation might praise his works to another.* Nothing is of such consequence to the good of *Posterity* as the *Propagation of Religion* to them, and the continuance of it among them; if they lose Religion they *lose their Glory*, and will soon lose their GOD.

3. BECAUSE of *the wrong they do themselves and others if Religion be not preserved & maintained.* If the knowledge of the Gospel should decay and be lost among a People, and darkness & ignorance prevail, sin & wickedness will grow apace among such a People. Corrupt and damnable Doctrines will be embraced, the *Enemy will sowares, if the Servants sleep.* The Souls of Men will soon be in a miserable condition, and the judgments of God both temporal & eternal will follow apace upon them. Yea they will soon be plagued and curses to one another. And as the present so the following generation are like to suffer by it, if the truth be not soundly and

purely preached, nothing else can be expected but that the Generations which succeed will grow more sottish and corrupt. They will be ignorant of the Truth, & prejudiced against it will be ready to think themselves safe if they follow the steps of their Ancestors. The practices of fore-fathers are usually receiv'd with reverence. 1 Pet. i. 18.—*vain conversation received by Tradition from your fathers.* The Papists cry up Ignorance for the *Mother of Devotion*: indeed it prepares a People blindly to follow *blind Guides*, wheresoever they will lead them; and experience shews how it hath brought on the *Anti-christian Apostacy*, and blended *Christianity* with *Paganism*, and instead of the purity of Gospel Truths and the power of Religion, the World hath been over-run with fond *Superstitious, pompous & idle Ceremonies*: from which how hard a thing hath it been to wean them, and still is, thro' the veneration they have of their *Ancestors*. And indeed all the World had been lost in error, prophaneness & superstition, if God had not raised up some *faithful Witnesses* in every Age to appear for, and defend his Truth against those that would have corrupted it, & rob'd them of it. That Ministers therefore may have a good account to give to God of those committed to their care, they are obliged to be faithful in this matter.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

U S E I. THIS lets us see, *That the Work of the Ministry is great & weighty, and great Accomplishments are requisite to the faithful discharge*

It is indeed honourable, but withal it is difficult & weighty ; even the great *Apostle of the Gentiles*, tho' furnished with extraordinary gifts & uncommon measures of Grace, cries out, *Who is sufficient for these things ?* 2Cor.2.16. Indeed none is sufficient, neither Man nor Angel, they han't a strength proportionable to it given them from above. Many indeed have betrayed their ignorance, inconsiderateness & insensibleness of the nature of the Work by a bold and rash intrusion into it : but whoever have been in any good measure sensible of what they were about to do, have gone into it *with much fear & trembling*, which I have often thought to be a reason of that *Petition* we are directed to make, Mat.9.37. *That the Lord of the Harvest would send forth Labourers into his Harvest* ; would make those willing that he hath made ready in some good measure, for this Work ; would lift them over all discouragements and dark appearances that ordinarily dispirit them. Now besides many other weighty things belonging to the work, and a variety of temptations & oppositions that they must encounter ; this shews it to be so, that the *Glorious Gospel of God is committed to their trust* ; They are set for the defence of the Gospel, to preach and defend the Truth ; to be able to convince gainsayers : to watch in all things, that the Truths of God might not suffer by errors & heresies in Doctrine, by superstition in Worship, by prophaneness in Conversation, among those that profess it. It's true they are not left alone in this work ; both

Magistrates

Magistrates & private Christians should shew their love to and zeal for the Truth, by a readiness upon proper occasions to be among the number of God's Witnesses; but this is the *Minister's Office* by way of *eminency*, and more is expected from them than from others, and *great Accomplishments* are requisite to the faithful discharge of it. As,

1. *GREAT Knowledge.* The *Princely Preacher* is a great *pattern* for all, of whom it's said, *Ecc. 12.9. Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge.* They should be furnished with *humane knowledge*, or the knowledge of *Tongues & Arts*, especially such as are subservient to the right understanding of the *Scriptures*, and to enable them to detect and refute the cavils of gainfayers. Much study, time & pains must necessarily be employed to this end; it is no easy thing to understand the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, to comprehend the *unsearchable Riches of Christ*, the glories of his Person & Offices, the *manifold wisdom of God*, in the method of Grace which he hath established of reconciling & saving lost Sinners by Him; bringing them into a state of Grace, preserving and building them up in Him, 'till they come to be prepared for Glory; to discover the *devices of Satan*, the deceitfulness of the Heart, and the many by-paths that men are ready to run into, and ruin themselves in. They need to be greatly furnished with *wisdom & knowledge*, to be *mighty in the Scriptures*. There needs solid knowledge & substantial learning. *He must be a wise Servant, who*

is Lord makes ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season, Mat. 24. 45. Prov. 11. 30. It's said, *He that winneth Souls is wise.*

2. GREAT Prudence. This is necessary not only for their own *personal conduct*, that they give no occasion to the ministry to be blamed, and in *guiding & governing the Church of God* that they may *do all things without partiality*, and according to the mind of Christ; but it is greatly necessary to the well discharge of their ministry. Partly, that they may insist on such things as are of *special necessity* to the Souls of Men. They must not preach so as to suit those that have *aching ears*, but so as is proper to take with the *Consciences of men*. They must seek out *acceptable words*. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of the Assemblies. Partly, that they may preach *seasonable truths*, according to the *present state* of their hearers, and suitable to the *Providence* of God. Words spoken in season are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. And partly, that they may rightly *divide the word of Truth*; not contenting themselves to speak general truths, but shewing to whom they belong, in giving *true Signs* of Grace, & signs of a withering condition, shewing who are under the reigning power of sin, and speaking words in season to him that is weary. Truths must be prudently dispensed, and prudently defended when attempts are made to undermine or corrupt them.

3. ZEAL and Courage. The Apostle Paul presses this in a most urgent and solemn manner upon Timothy, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. The word should be

be preached in an *affecting manner*, not as if a man were telling a dull story, but as concerned for the glory of God and the good of Souls, with warmth & earnestness of spirit. The *Prophet* is bid to *lift up his voice like a trumpet*, with great zeal & authority, to bear a testimony against the prevailing sins of the times; & the *Apostle* desires prayers *Eph. 6. 19, 20.* that he might *open his mouth boldly to speak the word as he ought to speak*. When Sin abounds and hath many advocates, there needs much *zeal & courage* duly to bear testimony against it. So when *errors & corruptions* prevail and these are supported by Men of parts, power and influence, they need a suitable measure of courage and zeal to defend it. Cowardice in Christ's Cause is treachery. God warns *Jeremiah* to *speak all that he commanded him*, and *not to be afraid of their faces, lest he confound him before them*. Our *best affections* are little enough to be employed in such a work. The *Male of our Flood* is God's due.

4. *EXPERIMENTAL Piety*. A spiritual understanding of the glory and truth of the Gospel accompanied with an experience of the power of it, begetting Grace in the Soul, and filling with divine comfort, will be an excellent inducement to move us to prize it, and keep it. By this means we come to understand the worth of it, and that it is a treasure too precious to be lost. In the *verse* before, the *Apostle* intimates that *faith & love* are as it were the *bands* by which we *hold the truth*, and when these are kept in exercise they will help us to *hold it fast*. Be
beside

besides the special operations of the Spirit be-
 setting in us these graces, there is special en-
 couragement given to those, that have *these* to
 expect the needful *assistance* of the *Holy Spirit*.
 Therefore in our *Text* he adds, Keep that good
 thing committed to thy trust, *by the Holy Ghost*
which dwelleth in us, q.d. believe & wait for his
 powerful assistance, seasonably to bring truth to
 your remembrance, and help you to love it and
 keep it. He can give light and strength in all
 ways of Temptation. The reason why *some make*
shipwreck of faith & a good Conscience, why they
turn aside from the Truth, & give heed to Fables, is
 because they never *received the truth in the love*
of it. They never soundly believed it, never felt
 the power of it upon their hearts. The presence
 of the Spirit in its *Graces* as well as *Gifts* is al-
 ways necessary to the well discharge of this
 trust. Therefore earnest & fervent *Prayers* should
 be daily sent up to Heaven by them, and for them;
 without this they will never be faithful nor
 successful.

U S E. II. OF EXHORTATION, both to
 Ministers and People, to attend this important
 duty, to *preserve & maintain the Doctrine of the*
Gospel in the purity of it. As Ministers must
 preach nothing but the Doctrine of Christ, so the
 professing People of God should embrace no other
 doctrine, whoever they be that preach it. *Tim.*
 3. As Ministers are to be careful to discharge
 their duty in propagating & preserving the truth
 as their Office requires; so private Christians
 in their places, should endeavour to receive the
 truth

truth in love, and to be well established in it, that they may not be *toss'd with every wind of doctrine, thro' the slight and cunning craftiness of men*: should labour to understand the truth, to see that what they embrace be indeed the truth; they should as the *Apostle* exhorts 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*: should be able when they have a call to it give a good reason of their faith & practice that their faith is not built upon the *wisdom of men*, and that they are not *lead* blindly into it: but it is what they have received from God that it is consonant to those *lively Oracles* the *Scriptures*, of which they believe and are sure that God is the Author.

I would particularly apply this *Exhortation* both to Ministers & People in three Things.

I. LET it be your care *to be right your selves and to set others right in matters of Faith*. That you may preserve and propagate the Faith once delivered to the Saints, be *Orthodox* in your Belief. This hath no small influence upon Men's practices. Therefore they are called, *to hold fast the form of sound words, to consent to wholesome words*. All Truths should be preserved, but those especially that are most weighty & necessary such as concern the *Being & Perfections of God*, the Doctrine of the holy & blessed *Trinity*, the Doctrine of *Christ*, in his *Natures, Person, & Offices*, of *Redemption* by him, & the way & means of the *Application* of it. Of Man's *Apostacy* from God, the loss of his image and favour, together

with

with the dismal effects of it in his sinfulness and misery, being obnoxious to the Curse of the Law, in the full latitude & extent of it; hence being legally & spiritually dead; the *Nature and Necessity of Conversion*, which is begun and carried on by conviction of this sinfulness & misery, thro' the application of the Law in the strictness, purity, and spiritualness of it, and an experimental knowledge of their own hearts, which where-ever it is will *humble men, & hide pride from them*, and shew them their nothingness in spirituals: his will (as the *Apostle* speaks,) *shut them up unto the faith*, (Gal. 3. 23.) Again, the indisputable sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his grace, and the *unfailing efficacy* of it where it is applied unto *Sanctification, Comfort & Perseverance*; the true nature of *Justifying Faith*, which lies not meerly in an *Assent* to the Truth of the Gospel, but in a *receiving & accepting & submitting* to Christ in all his Offices, from a conviction of his *divine Sufficiency*, the *perfection* of his Obedience, and the *meritoriousness* of his *Sufferings*, which he performed in the quality of *Mediator and Surety* for us, and the acceptableness to God of what he did. *Faith* is a *reasonable act*, it is supported by such *Pillars* as these that it is supported. I might have added, the *Doctrines* of the *Resurrection*, the *Last Judgment*, & the *future & eternal Recompences* that will follow upon it. These, and all others points of Faith, should be received, retained, & kept as a *precious Treasure*, or *Depositem* committed to their *Trust* for their own benefit & comfort, & for the service of succeeding generations.

2. BE concerned to *preserve the Worship of God in the Purity of it*. God's Zeal or Jealousy for his Worship should especially move us to be so, and it should awaken a becoming Zeal both in Ministers & Christians for it, when *Innovations* in it are threatned, & *Temptations* to embrace them are increased. It is a thing known & confessed that it was the cause of REFORMATION, which our *Fathers* owned & espoused, even a Reformation from the *Errors & Corruptions* that prevailed while *Popery* was predominant in the World; and though they blessed God for the beginnings of it & the progress that was made in it, yet they judged a *further Progress* necessary; that several *Officers* were retained in the Church & several *Ceremonies* and *Symbolical Rites* continued that were meerly of *humane Constitution*, & had no warrant either from *Scripture* or *Primitive Antiquity* to justify them. They could find in *Scripture* no Institution for any standing Officers in the *Christian Church*, but *Bishops & Deacons*, & that the former are indifferently called *Pastors & Teachers, Elders & Ministers of Christ, Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, yet they all denote one & the same Office, and that as the *Apostles* were all equal among themselves, so were all the ordinary *Bishops & Ministers* mentioned; nor have we any intimation of any preheminance, or superiority among them of one over others, that their *Commission* from Christ is the same, & that it is the Duty of all who are called to it, to *fulfil the Ministry*, & not content themselves to do part of it, & leave a part to be performed by others.

The

They believed & affirmed & it is beyond question what we ought to adhere to as a Principle, *That the Word of God is a perfect Rule of Faith and religious Worship, and that nothing ought to be admitted, that is contradicted by it, nor any thing imposed that is not prescribed therein.* And indeed this was a Principle that all PROTESTANTS acknowledged & proceeded on in their Separation from the Church of Rome. In the Scripture God hath given us a full declaration of his Will in all things relating to Religion, & this is the Standard by which all things must be tried, *Rectum est index sui et obliqui.*) Receeding from this and introducing *Traditions & Ancient Usages* and Customs of the Church, or the Sayings & Opinions of Men, hath been the rise of numberless Differences & Contentions, which there is no prospect of their being heal'd, till Christians are restored to their liberty of being obliged in the things of God only unto the *Authority of Scripture.* And indeed to lead Men from the *Scriptures* to *Fathers and Councils* & pretended *Traditions* were to lead them into a Wood without any sure Path or Guide: nor did they think that Church Guides had a power co-ordinate with Christ, to prescribe *Rites and Ceremonies* in worship, that he did not see meet to appoint, or that Christians were tied to yield a blind Obedience to them, without examining by the *Scriptures* what they were to believe & practice in Religion & the Worship of God. That this were to invade Christ's prerogative & to invalidate his Authority in the Church.

Now if acting on *these Principles* was warrantable

rantable & necessary to the preservation of Purity in the Worship of God, which I think can't be denied; it will follow that it is the Duty of both Ministers & Christians still to *adhere to them* & not to innovate & receive upon the credit of *humane Authority*, any *Officers, Ordinances, or Symbolical Rites* in the Worship of God, that he hath *never appointed*. But to receive, observe, *keep pure and entire* what he hath appointed, least they provoke his Jealousy against them, and render their Worship *unacceptable* to God, and *unprofitable* to themselves, *Exod. 20. 4, 5, 6. Mat. 15. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* Tho' Men may impose upon others in the Worship of God, yet none can be so weak as to think they have power to *bleſs* what they impose.

3. LET Ministers & Christians be careful to *maintain the Practice & Power of Religion.* The *Doctrine of Grace* is said to *bring Salvation*, as it teaches the true & only way in which we may arrive at it, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* And we are there told what it teaches us, even to *deny ungodliness & worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously & godly in this present world.* Man's primitive State was a State of holiness or likeness to God, this fitted him to glorify and enjoy God, but by his Apostacy he is fallen short of the glory or glorious Image of God. Hence his Nature is corrupted, his Soul in all the faculties of it depraved, Sin like a *spreading Leprosy*, hath weakened & defiled it. Hence the Scripture uses Metaphors from things most loathsome, filthy & abominable to set it forth.

Now

Now the great end of God in the revelation of His Grace in the Gosp. l, is to restore Man to his primitive purity, to bring him to the likeness and love of God, to an imitation of Him, to an entire resignation to Him, and to a complacency in Him as his portion and blessedness. It calls Men from the World to God, from Self to Christ, from Sin to Holiness. 2 Pet. 1. 4. *There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.* 2 Cor. 3. 18. *Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord.* It's end is to bring Men to a participation of Life from Him who is Life it self. So then, we sadly mistake if we think Religion lies in external Reformatations, tho' never so many and specious, in restraining the Hands from violence and dishonesty, the Body from impurity, or bridling the Tongue from exorbitances and indecencies in expression. The Pharisee wash'd the out-side of the cup and platter. Or in external Performances, tho' never so many, and seemingly Spiritual; tho' these things are needful, and useful, and helpful, yea and honourable to Men, being commanded by God, and putting some visible honour upon Him, yet the bare attending of these is too often made by men their Righteousness, and so become an abomination to God. Much less can that pass for Religion that spends it self about *Forms & Opinions* and *Parties*: These however strict and Orthodox they be, may be separable from the *Power of Godliness*; but Religion lies in Men's being Good, and doing Good; in their being *begotten again by the word of Truth*, in their being brought to a true and thorough *Repentance* for Sin, to an *unfeigned Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, depending upon Him for wisdom, righteousness and strength, deriving all from Him, and returning all to God by Him; *denying our selves*, and in an *imitation of God*, in living to and acting for His Glory, not only in a reverend religious attendance to all *acts of Worship* appointed by God, but in a *holy, serious, humble, heavenly, sober, righteous, useful course of Life*, in the daily exercise of *love to God and Men*, in a readiness to *maintain Good Works*; that we may not be unfruitful:

in a care to *adorn the Gospel* by a faithful discharge of relative duties, whether *Civil, Ecclesiastical, or Domestic*. In these things Religion is concern'd, and about these the Gospel gives the most excellent rules, and a due discharge of them contributes not a little to the adorning of it.

Now as a *Conclusion* I would say to You, Sir, in the words of the *Apostle*, 1 Tim. 4. 6. *If thou put the Brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine.* The foregoing Duties insisted on, will teach you the necessity of diligence in your Work, and continual dependance upon a Glorious and Ascended Saviour, in whom are hid all Treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in whom also all the fulness of the God-blessed dwells, that of His fulness we might receive Grace for Grace; and these are to be fetch'd by Faith and fervent Prayer. Faint not, tho' your Work be Great, yet your Helper is Great too, and the Reward of your faithfulness will be Great beyond expression, *Phil.* 4. 13. 1 *Pet.* 5. 4.

AND to You, my Brethren in this Place, I would add Let it not satisfy you, that you have the Ministry settled amongst you, as is the manner of your Neighbours; but let it be your concern, that the Good & Great Ends of the Ministry may be attained upon you, that the Gospel may be preached to you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven: that the fruits of it may appear in your Repentance, Faith, Holiness, in Righteousness, Peace, Joy, the Holy Ghost; in all Graces and Vertues, wherein the Doctrine of God may be glorify'd. Let your Ministry have a share in your fervent and daily Prayers, and all the Temporal Assistance and Encouragement that the Law Christ enjoins, (*Gal.* 6. 6, 7.) that he may give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, may meditate upon these things, and may give himself wholly to the 1 Tim. 4. 13, & 15.

E I N I S.

